

Message Text

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ACTION AGR-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 AGRE-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00

COME-00 EB-07 EUR-12 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01

SP-02 STR-04 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 /064 W

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R 221935Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2463

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, BL

SUBJECT: NEW GOB COMMITT ON RICE

REF: LA PAZ 6233

1. PRESIDENTIAL ADVISERS, WALKER HUMEREZ AND JOAQUIN AGUIRRE, DISCUSSED WITH ME ON SEPTEMBER 21 PRESIDENT BANZER'S CONCERN ABOUT THE PRESENT SURPLUS OF RICE IN BOLIVIA, ESTIMATED TO BE ABOUT 50,000 METRIC TONS, WHICH AUTHORITIES CANNOT SELL. THE ADVISERS INQUIRED WHETHER THE USG IN ANY ONE OF ITS PROGRAMS MIGHT BE ABLE TO ASSIST IN PURCHASING BOLIVIAN RICE. THEY DISCUSSED THE RELATIONSHIP OF RICE AND COCA LEAF PRODUCTION IN THE CHAPARE, NOTING THAT IF RICE PRODUCERS FAILED THEY WOULD TURN TO THE PRODUCTION OF COCA. AGUIRRE HAD EARLIER APPROACHED EMBASSY FOR HELP IN OBTAINING PRODUCTION AND MARKETING INFORMATION ON RICE (REFTEL).

2. I TOLD THE ADVISERS THAT I KNEW OF NO PRESENT USG PROGRAMS WHICH COULD POSSIBLY BE USED FOR THE PURCHASE OF BOLIVIAN RICE. I SAID THAT IT APPEARED TO BE AN ECONOMIC QUIESTION AND THAT SINCE WORLD PRICES HAD DROPPED THEY MAY HAVE TO SEEK MARKETS AT LOW PRICES IN ORDER TO CLEAR THEIR SURPLUS. I ALSO NOTED THAT GOB PROGRAMS FOR STIMULATION OF RICE SHOULD BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GRADUALLY REDUCED SO THAT THE SURPLUS WOULD NOT BE INCREASED.

I EXPRESSED SOME DOUBT THAT THE MAJOR RICE - PRODUCING AREAS ARE COMPATIBLE FOR COCA PRODUCTION, ALTHOUGH ADMITTEDLY LAND IN THE CHAPARE IS BEING USED FOR BOTH. I SAID I THOUGH CHAPARE RICE WAS BASICALLY FOR FARM CONSUMPTION.

3. THE ADVISERS SAID THAT PRESIDENT BANZER HAD PERSONALLY INSTRUCTED THEM TO REQUEST USG ASSISTANCE AND THAT WHILE THEY UNDERSTOOD MY POINTS, THEY ASKED THAT I TRANSMIT THE GOB CONCERN TO WASHINGTON IN CASE THERE MIGHT BE SOME PROGRAMS OR SUGGESTIONS THAT WASHINGTON COULD HELP BOLIVIA. ACCORDINGLY, I AM TRANSMITTING THIS INFORMATION IN COMPLIANCE WITH THEIR WISHES BUT I HAVE TOLD THEM I AM DOUBTFUL THAT THERE IS ANY POSSIBILITY OF A POSITIVE RESPONSE. HOWEVER, A PROMPT REPLY, EVEN THOUGH NEGATIVE, WOULD BE APPRECIATED SO THAT WE CAN ORIENT THE GOB TOWARD REALISTIC SOLUTIONS TO ITS PROBLEMS EVEN THOUGH IT MAY REQUIRE SELLING RICE AT A LOSS.
STEDMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RICE, SALES, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976LAPAZ07564
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760359-1210
From: LA PAZ
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760933/aaaabcbh.tel
Line Count: 78
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AGR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 LA PAZ 6233
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUL 2004 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <25 OCT 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW GOB COMMITT ON RICE
TAGS: EAGR, BL, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006